

# INNOVATOR

Accelerating Innovation for the American Driving Experience

## Pennsylvania's IdeaLink Propels Employee Ideas to the Top

The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation is tapping the collective wisdom and creativity of its employees through an online suggestion box. IdeaLink gives all staff members the opportunity to suggest ways to improve efficiency and safety at the workplace and on the state's highways.

And those ideas go straight to the top. Transportation Secretary Barry Schoch reviews each submission personally after it undergoes a thorough evaluation by subject matter experts.

The program, launched in August 2011, is part of the department's Next Generation initiative to modernize its processes and technologies. Not only does it give employees a direct link to the secretary, it provides Pennsylvania DOT leadership with input from staff at all levels on how the agency could operate more effectively and efficiently.

"We're breaking down barriers to implement new ideas," said Scott Christie, deputy secretary for highway administration. "It has energized the department. Em-

ployees now know that their ideas won't be stuck in a file drawer."

More than 1,000 recommendations have been submitted so far. Of the 480 Schoch has reviewed, more than 350 have been implemented. Ideas include ways to improve customer relations, boost safety, use resources—money and personnel—more efficiently, and enhance department procedures.

### Ideas in Action

One employee recommended putting installation dates on overhead highway signs. Designed to reflect vehicle headlights, the signs lose reflectivity over time, making them harder for drivers to see at night. The Pennsylvania DOT uses the Federal Highway Administration's 12-year replacement cycle for signs, but in the past the only way to find installation dates was to research state route project documents. Now the agency applies date stamps to the bottom left corner of signs at minimal cost and benefits from more efficient management of the sign program.

*continued on page 3*

## States Consider New Every Day Counts Innovations

A series of fall summits gave more than 1,000 professionals at the front lines of highway project delivery the opportunity to mull over the latest round of Every Day Counts innovations to shorten project delivery.

Each day-and-a-half event—held in California, Georgia, Maryland, Michigan, Missouri, Oregon, Rhode Island and Texas—featured sessions on the innovative project delivery strategies the Federal Highway Administration announced last summer. Four are new:

- **Strategies for locally administered Federal-Aid projects** are designed to help local public agencies navigate the complexities of the Federal-Aid Highway Program.
- **Three-dimensional modeling technology** allows for faster, more accurate and more efficient planning and construction.
- **Intelligent compaction** uses special vibratory rollers and GPS technology to improve the quality, uniformity and performance of pavements.
- The use of **alternative technical concepts** enables contractors to propose innovative options on projects that are equal to or better than the state's criteria.

*continued on page 4*

### Inside This Issue:

**Pennsylvania's IdeaLink Propels Employee Ideas to the Top**

**States Consider New Every Day Counts Innovations**

**New York's Diverging Diamond Draws Public Praise**

**How the EDC2 Initiatives Were Chosen**

**EDC's Role in MAP-21**

**Arkansas Project Demonstrates Roller-Compacted Concrete**

**States Innovate**

**Calendar**



Representatives of highway agencies in the Mid-Atlantic states convened in Baltimore to learn about Every Day Counts strategies to shorten project delivery.

